

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) is pushing for more review and public input into Canadian National Railway Company and Grand Trunk Corporation's purchase of the EJ&E West Company tracks.

CN's purchase is expected to greatly increase the amount of freight traffic on rail lines through Eight District communities. Bean has been working to open up the process and ensure that community concerns are addressed. The primary concern is the increased number of trains – up to four times as many – crossing local streets.

“Local traffic congestion, already a problem, would be seriously exacerbated,” Bean said. “In addition, the potential for danger at grade crossings, to children in school buses or families in their cars, is too great not to merit a more thorough discussion.”

In the Barrington area alone, there are eight crossings at street-grade level along the EJ&E tracks. The increased freight traffic could have broad impacts on the region's transportation, including significant delays to already congested arterial roads such as Illinois Route 59, U.S. Route 14 and Lake Cook Road. Route 14 is the main route between the residential neighborhoods of McHenry County and the employment centers of northwest suburban Cook County.

Bean has sent formal notice to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) – which governs the transaction – that she wishes to be involved in the proceedings and has concerns. Following her Nov. 21 letter to the STB, the agency agreed to complete an Environmental Impact Statement study and staff hearings for the transaction.

Bean has also met with STB Chairman Charles D. “Chip” Nottingham, who agreed to hold a formal “field hearing” in the district involving STB officials this spring.

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